

ACROSS THE ALPS.

A Railroad Ride Through the Mont Cenis Tunnel.

THE GRAND ENTRANCE OF SAVOY

A Model French Country-house—Wad- ing Through Mud at Uriage— A Sunset in Italy.

[From a Lady Correspondent of the CHRONICLE.]

TURIN, August 18, 1875.

"We are going to Savoy," said we one fine morning to our friends in Paris, and we said it with a feeling of self-complacency mingled, I fear, with a tinge of self-conceit, as if—about to do something aside from the usual line—we were showing a little originality and a great deal of good taste. "To Savoy?" said a friend, whose kindness, refined taste and mental culture had made his society charming, "then by all means stop at Uriage—it is at the entrance of Savoy, the door of Paradise. Uriage is a valley whose charms are indescribable, so unique in character as to be incomparable. When the hand of God scooped out that lovely valley, at His divine touch sprang forth everywhere life and beauty; the mountains which surround it are an unbroken picture of verdure, where vine, field and wooded height rival each the other's attractions; there, far above your head the cattle feed, and at your feet are springs of life and health. In the valley, you remember, and love more than ever, all your friends; on the heights you converse with God. When the disgrace of Sedan mantled my brow with a blush of shame which would not fade; when desperate and exhausted by fruitless labors in my own humble sphere and no longer able to restrain my indignation against those who no more merited to bear the name of Frenchmen, I sought the plateaus of the Alps, it was only at Uriage—where in solitude, day after day, from morn to night, I climbed the highest summits as if there I might come nearer to God—that I at last found the calm of which I had so much need, and the courage to again take up life's duties and carry them to the end. By all means, then, stop you at Uriage, and permit me to offer you for reading there, some verses which the spirit of the scene inspired me to write.

A MODEL FRENCH COUNTRY HOUSE.

Thus we bade adieu to beautiful Paris with much less regret than we could have done had our anticipations been less enthusiastic, and all the way on our two days journey we felt thankful that the pleasures of the traveler were ours. On the afternoon of the second day, as we were congratulating ourselves on the commencement of our mountain travel, a tempest arose; the thunder rolled—rolled—rolled—from mountain to mountain, and of course we had to quote Byron, who had told us all about it, and our enthusiasm was not at all dampened by the heavy shower. At last we arrived at Uriage, and there we stayed three days waiting in vain for the pouring rain to cease and the clouds to lift their impenetrable veil from the mountains. We had a large, damp and uncomfortable room on the ground floor of a house, whose original purpose I am not sure of. I only know that the light entered only by a glass door, outside of which were barn doors that we used to shut at night. On the mantel-shelf was the fine French clock which you find everywhere in France—even in the most ordinary places it is—however, never running, which always annoys me, and I have made it my regular habit in going up and down and back and forth through the country to wind up and regulate all the clocks in France, until I begin to be afraid of being a sort of rival to Old Mortality. Besides the clock there were an unpainted table, a bed and two chairs, all at straggling distances from each other, and the boards of the floor looked aguish at the solitary deer-skin, which seemed to dwindle to the size of a mouse. Twice a day we

WADED THROUGH MUD AND RAIN

An eighth of a mile, to the house where the table was spread, and once we ventured to to the baths—for Uriage is a watering-place famous for its saline springs—and we thought we had never seen a better, since it watered all the time. From 4 o'clock each morning until nearly noon, every half-hour a covered carriage stopped at our door, to convey visitors to the baths, and we were awakened by the voice of the driver shouting, "En voiture, pour l'établissement, en voiture, pour les bains!" as if it were worth while to pay for being soaked in that place. In vain we longed to see those inspiring summits, those mountain walls in verdure clad where our friend had tasted of the healing plants; the monotonous sound of the rain was the only divine whisper we heard, and the persistent cloud shut out the heaven we longed for. What should we do? There we were, armed and equipped with our poetry furnished expressly for the occasion, and no prospect of our being able to make use of it for days or weeks to come, for we found on inquiry, that the weather had been the same nearly all Summer; moreover, we were told by one of the guests—whom we had vainly tried to persuade from her belief that the howling of a dog was a fatal prophecy, but who most decidedly answered that it must be true, for the thing had happened in her house—that a famous astrologer of Marseilles had foretold that the storm was to continue nine days longer; already we believed in the astrologer, and, lest we should get to believing in a good many other things, we concluded to take our poetry and go in search of some place where it would fit.

CHAMBERY.

A few hours by rail brought us to Chambery, which, though seen (or unseen) mostly by night, made its own photograph in our mind. Our hotel was built on the quay, the carriage-road only intervening between the river wall and the house. The river was the Laisse; swollen by the recent rains, yet smooth for so rapid a stream, its black waters as they rushed by seemed almost to shout their music in our ears the whole night long. Early morning brought me to the window, almost astonished that with such swiftness the river had not run itself dry, but there it still was illustrating the old simile, as, self-absorbed, it hastened with unslackened speed to the valley beyond. A week later, however, the black, noisy river had shrunk into a shallow, narrow stream, and had it been by the Laisse that the classic sluggard laid himself down to wait for the river to dry up that he might cross, he would not have been so foolish after all. The not distant neighborhood of the Mont Cenis tunnel allured us from Chambery into Italy. It is with an uncertain feeling of timidity or awe that one enters upon his first passage through the grand tunnel of the Alps. The engine labored slowly up the steep acclivity, and miserly views opened into wonderful valleys beyond and snow-clad heights above, rendering us speechless as the train almost staggered up the dizzy path. At last we reached

THE TUNNEL.

As we entered its darkness I took one hasty, daylight glance around me, and as I looked at my opposite neighbor his presence inspired me with more courage than that of my right-hand neighbor; for was not the former a fine old priest whose profession bespoke safe passage through the deepest and darkest of tunnels, yet who showed that he merited this world, too, by the good use he made of it, for did he not lovingly hold in his embrace a goodly knapsack from which protruded the necks of two well-filled bottles; and did I not recall to myself as I looked at him the story of the wise virgin who took her oil with her? From the priest and his wine-bottles my eye wandered to a notice over his head, cautioning passengers against any alarm at any explosion they might hear, as, the tunnel being under repairs, torpedoes were placed on the track to warn workmen of the approach of the train. The rest of the passage I spent in bracing my nerves against the expected shock, and was almost disappointed at not hearing a single explosion. We were just twenty-three minutes in passing through the tunnel, and the first five were longer than all the rest. The first warning we had of having nearly completed the passage was the sight of a red glowing furnace through a semi-circular opening; immediately afterward we flew by another furnace, and then we knew—though the illusion was the same in spite of our knowing—that those red-hot spires were but eminences of the sun-lighted earth.

FAIR ITALY.

At last we emerged from the tunnel and looked for the first time in our lives on fair Italy beneath us. It would take another pen than mine to tell you of that wonderful descent of the Alps; we were without words and could but clasp each other's hands in silence. Soon tunnel followed tunnel, near together as it to keep each other in countenance for daring to be tunnels after the great one we had just left; sometimes they so nearly joined each other that we had but a short glimpse as we hurried over some mountain torrent, foaming and leaping almost perpendicularly down, down, down, whither we could not tell; next we tremble as the yawning chasm beneath the bridge we cross frowns and threatens with the blackness of its immeasurable depths. And so for many a mile we rush through tunnel after tunnel, over chasm after chasm and mountain torrent after mountain torrent, till closing day finds us far down the Italian Alps. As we descend it is the heights above us rather than the laughing fields below that draw our eyes with irresistible power. It was our first sunset in Italy; the mountains lifted their snowy caps to salute the retiring sun; the dark shadows slowly rose higher and higher, till their giant forms rivalled the mountains in height; the soft clouds hovered in gentle beauty—half of earth and half of heaven—and when the sun, reluctantly and slowly, stooped and imprinted its final good-night kiss on earth's brow they blushed, and, blushing, hid in roseate beauty the now lonely mountain top. L.